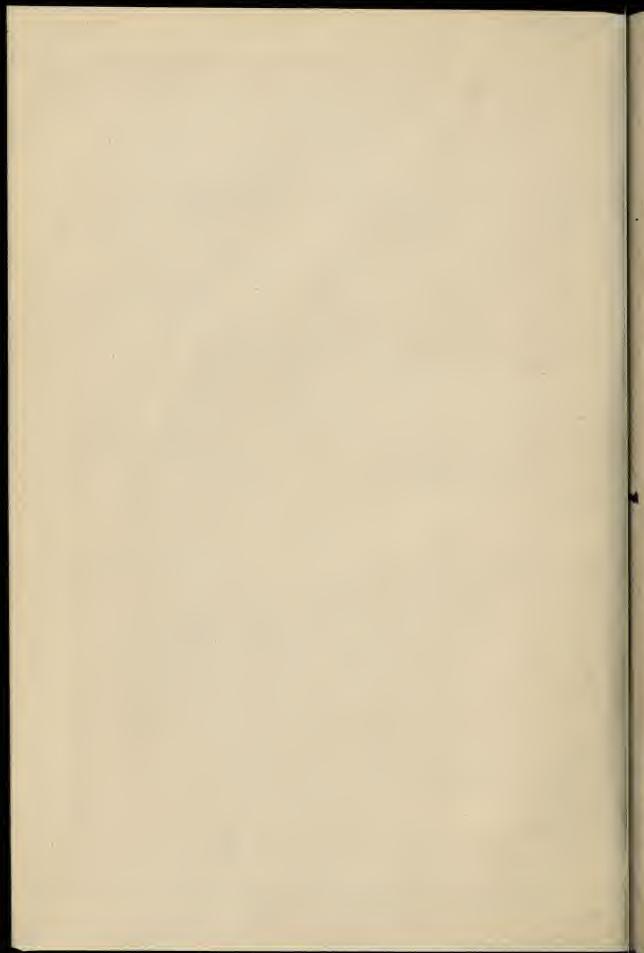


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TÜBINGEN



REMINISCENCES
OF THE
LAST FOURTEEN DAYS
OF
The Rev. Samuel Hebich
(1803-68)
A
WITNESS OF JESUS CHRIST



MANGALORE
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1.

OUTLINES OF THE
LIFE OF THE REV. S. HEBICH

LATE MISSIONARY OF CANNANORE.

THE Rev. Samuel Hebich was born on the 29th of April 1803 at Nellingen in the kingdom of Württemberg, where his father held a curacy. In 1817 he entered a house of business at Lübeck in the north of Germany, where his elder brother then lived. In 1825 he accepted employment in a large firm at the same place, which sent him abroad as its travelling clerk all through Sweden and Finland, to St. Petersburg and Moscow. This post he occupied nearly six years. Having found in the meantime the one "pearl of great price," and growing anxious to make as much of it as he possibly could, he left the service of his employers in December 1831 and entered the Mission College at Basel. About that time the Basel Evangelical Mission Society being anxious to begin a Mission on the western coast of India, thought no one better fitted for this responsible work than Mr. Hebich. Accordingly he left Basel in March 1834 with the brethren Messrs. Lehner and Greiner, and proceeded to India to begin his work in the name of the Lord. From 1834 till 1840 he laboured at Mangalore and Dharwar, and from 1841 to 1859 at Cannanore in the north of Malabar. What he has done for the Lord, what a blessing he has been to many a Native and European, not only at the above mentioned stations but all over southern India, need not be detailed here; he lives still in the memory of all that knew him, because he was an "epistle known and read of all men". In May 1859 he left his beloved Cannanore never to return again. Being rather unwell he intended to spend a few months on the Nilgherries for the benefit of his health, and from thence to set off on a long journey over all India, from Madras to Calcutta and Bombay. These were his own thoughts at that time,

but the thoughts of the Lord were far different. Instead of getting better on the Hills he got worse, and his medical adviser ordered him back to his native country. He never liked the idea of leaving the mission-field, but wished to live and die amongst his "black children". However with his usual childlike submission to the will of God, he left his beloved Malabar and returned to Germany, not indeed to live at ease, but to spend and be spent in the service of his heavenly Master. For three years he had no fixed dwelling place amongst his own people; he was travelling from town to town, from village to village, all over Switzerland and a great part of South Germany, preaching the Gospel to thousands and thousands, and being made the means of conversion to hundreds of souls. About five years ago a few Christian friends procured for him a comfortable but small house at Stuttgart, the capital of Württemberg, of which he made a happy home. The little abode is situated on a beautiful hill in the immediate vicinity of Stuttgart, commanding a full view of the whole town with all its suburbs, parks and palaces. The old Indian was often heard to say: I am more beautifully lodged than the king himself. To show his heartfelt gratitude to those Christian friends, he wrote their names over his bedstead. But dear as his home was to him, he only spent the winter months in it; the summer months being regularly set apart for preaching excursions; nor would he rest during winter. On certain evenings of the week he preached in the hall of the Evangelical Society of Stuttgart, and went from house to house speaking the word in season and out of season. Last winter his ministry was exceedingly blessed; many souls, especially young men and women, turned to the Lord. These are his children, who are so frequently mentioned in the following pages. In the 5th of May 1868 he had brought his preaching to a close at Stuttgart; he had sent letters to his friends at Carlsruhe, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Baden, and at Basel, informing them of his intention to be amongst them presently, if, he added, it be the will of the Lord, and we live! On Wednesday, the 6th of May he was seized with a sudden and most severe attack of illness. His liver was much swollen, and the disease assumed a most dangerous character. He at once prepared for the summons of his heavenly Master. I only wish to die, he said to Dr. Gundert of Calw, his old friend and fellow-

labourer of India. What in the following 15 days of suffering and affliction passed between his soul and his Saviour, and what even during his last sore trials he has been to all around him, the reader will find in the following pages. At three o'clock in the morning of Ascension day, the 21st of May he changed his lovely home on the hill near Stuttgart for the mansion in his Father's house; the remembrance of which had so often filled his heart with gladness and made his eyes beam during his blessed pilgrimage through the desert of this world. No relation, no one of kin was with him in his time of need, but numbers of spiritual children ministered to his wants, nursed him with more than filial love and care and wept over him as their father in Christ.

On Sunday the 24th of May his remains were conveyed to the Christian colony of Kornthal, about six miles from Stuttgart, where he had wished, his body should rest until the great day of Resurrection. The hearse was followed by more than three thousand people, who had assembled from all parts for this occasion; it was the greatest funeral party, that ever had been seen in that place. When amidst singing and praying the body had been interred, the funeral party resorted partly to the Church and for want of room partly to the garden of the personage, where they were addressed by different speakers. In the Church the president of the Basel Mission, Senator Christ-Sarasin, Dr. Gundert of Calw and Mr. Irion of Carlsruhe, as well as Mr. F. Müller of Stuttgart, Indian friends and fellow-labourers of the departed, and Mr. Spahn of Schaffhausen, a spiritual son of his, spoke each in his turn, not magnifying the beloved Missionary, but adoring the grace of God by which he was, what he was. Late in the evening the party dispersed, each feeling that a great man of God had departed from amongst them, and yet praising the Lord for all his goodness towards the children of men.

May the writer of these few lines be allowed to add, that he himself knew the departed since 1842, and loved him not only as a dear brother in Christ, but as a parental friend. From October 1857 to May 1859 he had the privilege of labouring with him at the same station, Cannanore. Never will he forget those happy days; he will always remember the childlike but ever triumphant faith, the pure

unfeigned love, the patient hope and unwearied endurance in well-doing of our dear Senior Missionary. He only regrets his not having profited so much by him, as he might have done. All praises are due to the Lord and to Him alone. Mr. Hebich would have none for himself, still it is only right to say, that he not only commenced the Basel Evangelical Mission in India, but impressed upon it this motto: Preach Christ and Him crucified! Proclaim free pardon in Jesus Christ to all that believe in Him! Never fear man! May this motto remain as long as the Mission lasts.

No doubt a history of the life of this dear servant of the Lord will shortly be written by some competent writer, and then these rough lines may fall into oblivion.

It has been the chief aim of the writer to render the text of the fragments given in the following pages in the way in which he knew, our dear brother would have expressed himself in the English language. His English friends will recognize his voice at once. The only wish the writer would express is, that all into whose hands these lines may happen to fall, may derive the same blessing from them, as he himself enjoyed when reading them. And now let us follow his faith by which he being dead yet speaketh, considering the end of his conversation.

Tellicherry 24th July 1868.

N. N.

GRACE AND PEACE

BE UNTO ALL BELOVED IN CHRIST JESUS. HALLELUJAH!

In the morning at eight o'clock of Wednesday the 6th of May our dear Missionary had a severe attack of illness, which brought him very low. Feeling extremely weak and prostrated, he wished that no visitors should be admitted, and that only two of his children might now and then come into his room to see if he wanted anything.

On Thursday he got a few hours' rest, and seemed to be much better.

On Saturday he said: I have been so perplexed all these days about my proposed journey. I had not that inward joy and assurance, I usually felt on such occasions. I could not see my way clear before me. Baden, I am sure, must now be given up, and whether I shall see Switzerland depends on the Lord.

On Sunday he expected many visitors, but feeling too ill to see any of them, and yet fearing some might be offended at their not being admitted, he sent away even his two children, who wished to have waited on him during the day.

On Saturday morning he got a little rest, but in slumbering was occupied with some backsliders, who had caused him great sorrow of heart. The following words were heard distinctly in the adjoining room: They are wicked people; the devil has corrupted all—the devil, the devil,—tell them that in the name of the Lord! After a short pause he was heard to say: Tell them, that I was exceedingly thankful; I got what they sent me through L. E., but I cannot write now.

After a few unintelligible words, he went on to say: Everything seems to be at such a distance now;—it is so very, very far away from us! Things must be brought near.—At that time the Cardinals and the Pope were there—and there was Huss; but they hated him—and why? what was his fault? He was a true man of God,—but he told them of their wrongs; therefore they laid hold on him. He must be killed, they said, and they have killed him! He was a Roman—yea

himself a Roman! but God had chosen him to be His witness, and for that witness he laid down his life. These things are now so very far from us; however it is still the same; a witness of Jesus must not count his life dear unto himself, even unto death. That Huss was a mere man, but Jesus is God, and according to the eternal purpose of God he was to suffer.—The highpriests have put him to death.—From all eternity Jesus has been appointed to be the lamb of God, which should be slain;—the Father has chosen him for that purpose. For we read in the last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. But his witnesses had first to be endued with power from on high. These things must be brought near; you will profit nothing by them, if they are so far off, only stored up in your heads having happened 1800 years ago! (Saying this, he awoke).

The doctor was now called for, who, when he had seen him, said that the liver was seriously affected, and advised him to use the waters at Carlsbad in Bohemia, whither he should remove without delay. The rest of the day the dear patient spent quietly. Towards evening his servant heard him speak to himself of his children at Schaffhausen. Then he sang a few verses of the hymn: Oh! precious Jesus, we wait for thee! After this he went on to say: Oh! thou Bridegroom of our souls, thou hast bought us with thy precious blood, that we might be a royal priesthood unto God thy Father; thou hast loved us, and washed us from our sins; thy mercy, oh Lord, is very great. Hallelujah! Amen.

On Monday he gave directions respecting his will, and ordered letters to be written to his friends at Basel, Schaffhausen and Carlsruhe. He wished them to be told, that his coming unto them was an impossibility; at the same time he asked them to consider what the Lord would teach them by his being prevented from coming, and to examine themselves, whether they had received the word of life he had preached to them before, as they ought to have done.

Then he spoke very plainly to two of his children about their souls, adding: If I kept back these things from you, I could not be your father and friend in the Lord.

About noon of this day he said to the young men who attended him: Now, take a hymn and sing to me something. You need not spend much time in choosing; take what you like, and sing a few verses at intervals, till you have got through the whole of it; you need not wait for my order to go on singing again.

In this way the following hymns of the Württemberg Church Hymn book were sung to him: Ah! Jesus Christ, my glorious light! N. 349. Precious Jesus, what was thy crime! N. 138. Early, when the sun arises. N. 173.

The first of these hymns: Ah! Jesus Christ, my glorious light! had long been his favourite hymn, and he enjoyed it very much at this time. He always joined the singing in a spirit of prayer and devotion.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, the 12th May, he asked: How is my friend N.? Oh! said his attendants, he is very anxious about you; he wanted to stay with you all night, lest you should be left alone.

On hearing this, he smiled and said: Tell him, I am never left alone; my dear children have been with me all night; they have ever been ready to assist me, and when I got a little rest, I preached to them. Sometimes I tried to stop, thinking it was now enough, but I was soon obliged to go on preaching again. All that I have to say, stands so very plainly before my soul. It is so glorious! This is a beautiful congregation! Already in 1839, when the Lord had almost killed me in India, He showed this congregation to me in a dream, and when on my return to Europe, I went to Switzerland and came to Stuttgart, I found it exactly as He had shown it to me at that time. These dear souls are always around me—many, many young boys in the front and in the rear, at the right hand and on the left. They wish to be with me all night. (The young people, of whom he spoke, are his children in Christ.) When he was told, that two young men had sent in a present for him, he said: Oh! that money! they had better listen more attentively to the word of God. Oh! poor Mrs. N.!

On Tuesday Inspector Josenhans of Basel arrived to see him. He was full of joy and had a tolerably good night.

On Wednesday morning the 13th, at seven o'clock, he was going to take a drive. Full of joy he looked at the two young men who were with him, and said: How happy am I! I can lie down and die

without the least care or anxiety. I have none to care for, no father nor mother, neither wife nor child, in fact, nothing that causes me the least anxiety. No man can be as happy as I am! Just before the drive he knelt down in his bedroom to pray, but being too weak to rise from his knees again, he had to be lifted up.

At noon he was asked by a telegram from Schaffhausen, whether Br. Sp. who was very dear to him, might come and see him. He telegraphed back, that by the grace of God, he had a very good night, so that there was again some hope for recovery, but that he was still too weak to receive any one, adding: Rest is the highest gift.

But he was not to get the so much longed for rest. At noon till late in the evening whole parties of visitors were announced, whom he admitted, and had long conversations with them, after which he felt exceedingly tired. On the following day he said: Those men have eaten up the remainder of my strength; but I could not have sent them away. I am so glad to have spoken to them. Mentioning the name of one of them he said: It is something very great, that the poor fellow had courage enough to come and see me. I am glad for it. But he is still very stupid, he understands nothing.

Oh! would that the people, upon whom he wasted the last of his strength to preach the word of God to them, may take it to heart for the salvation of their souls.

After the exertions of the preceding day and a restless night, his children found him on Thursday morning at five o'clock lying on the sofa in great agony. He asked for his Bible, and read the 22d Psalm in an undertone to himself. When he came to the 15th verse "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death," he said: This is not yet true with me, still a little bit of it,—yes, but the Lord Jesus has finished the whole of it for me. This is the breaking down of life that has now fairly commenced with me.

After a little while he continued: I do not think that I am going to Karlsbad at all.—Ah, yes, my lovely Jesus! At 10 o'clock on the same morning he said to one of his children: Just now I was thinking of my dear brother K. Do you think he will come soon? One of his children said to him: I have asked the Lord to give me the same spirit,

which you have got. The old man smiled, and with unexpressible tenderness said: All right, but in order to receive that spirit, we must be very obedient children, and you are still such a disobedient fellow. Ah! said the lad, but I wish to be obedient. That is right, rejoined the sick man, everything has a beginning.

In the afternoon, when alone in his bedroom, he seemed to be occupied with a person in a high position, for he was heard to say: If the man repent and openly confess, that hitherto he has not preached the pure word of God, and make a new beginning in the Lord Jesus, all will be right at last. All that is not done in the Lord Jesus is lost for ever. But it is exceedingly difficult for one in such a high position, to throw the honour before man over board and become a fool for Christ's sake.

In the evening he said to N. N.: Since I saw you last, precious souls have come out, young heroes! God has revealed the mystery unto them. They have got it all at once. They have overcome the wicked one! Is it not glorious?

Whether you feel your sins or not, only come to Jesus just as you are. Whosoever comes to Jesus will be accepted. Jesus receives them all. Oh what a Lord is my Lord! the Lord whom I am serving! Let us worship him in holy garments! He has loved me first, so I am loving him in return. This is the whole mystery! Oh wonderful mercy of our God! Jesus receives sinners! such sinners as we are. Let us never make anything of self. This is what the Lord has given me during the few weeks—these dear souls I mean. They are beautiful fellows, and before I closed my preachings a number of girls also turned to the Lord.

It is now fully forty-seven years, since the Lord has found me. All this time He has carried me in His bosom, and led me gloriously; He never entered with me into judgment; he has ever been faithful, and will be so even to the last. Just now I was at death's door. I longed to depart, to go to my Lord! I am weary of life! I have laboured much.

When that brother was about to leave him, he looked at him very tenderly and said: I am glad to have seen you once more; keep close to your Jesus always, especially when your last hour draws near. The Lord is faithful; he will never leave, nor forsake you.

On Friday morning at four o'clock, when lying on his couch, he exclaimed: Thou hast loosed the pains of death! These words he repeated about six times at short intervals with great devotion.

At that time his sufferings must have been intense and unremitting; but instead of heavy groanings, his face beamed with heavenly joy, and with the utmost tenderness of voice he repeated a hundred times over and over again: "Oh! thou good Lord!" and then continued: All that comes from thee pleases me, though it be as bitter as wormwood. All this comes from the Lord, who loves me.

When two of his children expressed their intention to stay with him for the night too, he was very thankful; the preceding night he had sent them home. These dear people remained with him not only during that night, but to the last moment of his life.

The soul, he said, does not suffer; there is all peace, no pains whatsoever; the body only suffers. The Lord is my portion, my salvation, my honour, my strength, my comfort, my peace, my life, my joy, my glory, my all. What I testified of thee was put into my mouth by thy most precious Holy Ghost. Ah! beloved Father, holy God, good Lord, kindest Saviour!

To brother N. N. he said: You must lay hold on your Lord; you must honour your Lord and bid the devil to depart at once. Ah I shall rejoice with unspeakable joy, if the Lord will take me home now. All is well. Nothing between me and my Lord, nothing, nothing whatsoever. I rejoice with my whole heart; He will ever....saying this he fell asleep.

The same day he said to a young man: I believe, I shall now enter into the joy of my Lord. Be good children, and let the Lord be with you, your all—half ways will not do, that is all humbug! Remember me kindly to brother N., tell him, not to allow anything to come between him and his Lord. I have an inward feeling, that my time is over. Keep close to our merciful Lord Jesus, be a fool for His name's sake. Do all your duties faithfully. A true Christian will ever be a faithful labourer.

When departing, this man dropped a thanksoffering for the Mission on the table. When it was handed over to him, he said with joyful emotion: I am glad of it; may the Lord bless his soul. This is beautiful. Oh Lord, look upon it in mercy! Oh Lord, accept it. He is a

good Lord! He can direct the hearts. Ah, this is very nice; the Lord will reward him abundantly.

Turning to his own ease he said: There will yet be some severe struggles before all is over, which the old man does not like. Oh God of love! Merciful God! My Lord and my King!

When Mrs. N. N. came to see him, he said: Well, how is your husband? I wished, he were as wise as I am, that is to say, I wished him to become a fool for Christ's sake; but he is still with the world. He knows to talk so nicely, that people take him for a wise, amiable man, who is doing a great deal for the kingdom of God, but it is all a lie. Oh! it is so great, if a soul be fully on the Lord's side, but this half-way business will never do! People who pervert the word of God, are always at hand, and the poor souls are confounded. Then addressing himself to a young man, he said: Behave like the son of a king! like a Son of the heavenly King, I mean.

Soliloquising he said: Well, my blue coat, the trowsers, which I brought from India, the black necklace and the night-cap will make a nice suit. This is my caste. People must know, that I was a Missionary. Let them make a simple coffin, which does not cost much. I do not wish to lie gaily dressed in my grave; that would not do for me! Let none come to dissect me. I won't have these butchers! Let them wash my hands and face, and put on a clean shirt. All this can be done by my own people. I will not have any strangers. I do not wish to fall into the hands of strangers.

When his children asked him, which text should be taken for his funeral sermon, he answered: That I leave undecided; my old friend St. knows to do everything so nicely; he has got a wonderful spirit of prayer; sometimes he is rather too long, never coming to an end. Let him be very short, and ask him not to make any humbug. Short and good! He can if he will! I suppose, they will put a stone upon the grave. Let it have the following inscription: "A witness of Jesus Christ from the Missionfield!"—nothing more. This is the great word, this is my rank. For this I have been called by the Lord.

When he was asked, whether the funeral notice should be headed by a text, he took his Bible and pointed to Acts 4, 11. 12. "This is the stone, which was set at nought of you builders, which is become

the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Then praying he went on to say: People do not know, neither do they wish to know, what thou hast done for us. All has been accomplished; the pains of death are loosed. Ah it would be so glorious, if the Lord should have mercy upon me. I have quite enough. I can work no longer. At intervals he repeated the words: "Oh thou good Lord!"

On Friday the 15th towards evening he said: The Lord Jesus has loosed the pains of death, he has got the victory! He has bruised the head of the serpent. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. So saying he fell asleep.

To three sisters, who came to see him, he gave the following account of his sickness: "On Wednesday I had the first attack. On Thursday I felt a little better; but since that I got worse every day. On Sunday the doctor came and prescribed some medicine, which brought me some relief; but soon after the disease assumed a very dangerous character, and I am getting worse day by day. I do not think, I shall live. I hope to go to glory. No death is in the Lord Jesus! That is glorious! My Jesus has loosed the pains of death. It is just, as if my belly had fallen into the hands of some shoemaker, who was driving in nail after nail all around it; and here on the right side into the liver I feel as if a lot of piercing instruments or heaps of pins were sticking. If I were in India, all would have been over in two days, and I no longer found above the ground. Ah my India! the lovely country, the beautiful country, my own country, a paradise, a wonderful land, dear children there!

I am now sixty-six years old. Sixty-six years the Lord did bear me! Is it not very great? O, for the joy to have the Lord Jesus, to have the life! In the soul I have no sufferings whatsoever, they are only in the body. Inside all is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Jesus has done everything for me, and He will remain faithful to the last. Yea, He will remain faithful and true for ever. Give up your hearts to the Lord Jesus, and not to the devil.

On Saturday morning the 16th May, he prayed: All my sufferings and sore trials are with thee. I am thy purchased inheritance. Oh

thou my Lord, and my God! Today is the Sabbath of my God, to-day my Lord and my God did rest from all his works. In Him alone is rest. He is my shepherd; I shall not want. All my infirmities are before thee. All my bones are hidden in thy sanctuary. All my thoughts are known to thee.

Oh! how beautiful! All will be made new through thy power, by which thou art able to make all things subject unto thee! All my thoughts are bound up in a bundle with thee! All my bones are numbered! All my bones are bound up in a bundle with thee!

After some time he said: I was entrusted with great divine powers; I know that. God has granted me mighty powers. What have I not endured by devils and men? But I have got the victory. I have maintained my ground amongst those hosts of devils, but I succeeded merely by the power, which He has given me. No man can understand these divine powers. Only by faith they will be understood and felt. A faithless world will not, never can conceive these things. All glory must be given to God. If a man wishes to get such divine powers, he must lay down everything under God's feet. I have endured much; I often despaired of my life! Oh! but for the goodness of the Almighty; He is the Almighty, the Lord Jehovah Jesus, who was, and is, and ever shall be the Holy One of Israel. Then praying he said: Sixty-six years thou didst bear me with great patience and long-suffering, never entering with me into judgment. Oh thou good Lord, how tenderly thou ever didst deal with me, tenderly....tenderly with me, oh thou good Lord!

Let nobody add anything to the Gospel, to the rich Gospel. The Lord has given His life for it. The Lord is my portion, should I ever want? He is the strength of my right hand, the Holy One of Israel, the faithful God, my portion and my salvation! Thou hast revealed thyself unto me by the blessed spirit of God, thou hast put thy word into my mouth. Abba, Father, all my bones are bound up in a bundle with thee. Oh Lord, my God, do not forsake me in this my last hour!

Saturday evening, when his friends were washing his feet, he smiled and said: These are dear feet, they carried peace far and wide, they have made many long walks for the Lord. Then he asked his children, upon what they had decided for the night, and to their

answer to remain with him, he said: That is right, I like to have always the same people about me; but I am afraid, it will be too much for you; you must try to get some rest for yourself, and care for me too; I am no more able to take care of myself.

On Sunday morning at seven o'clock he said to them: What a mercy, that the Lord has appointed you to take care of me. Today is Sunday! This is the day of rest. I am afraid, there will be visitors, but I cannot see any of them. I cannot receive any of them. Only rest it is I want—rest! the best of all gifts. We must have rest to-day—only rest!

But he was not to enjoy the so much longed for rest, any more in this life. He spent the day in great restlessness, and on the following day his sufferings and weakness increased. Again he said: No sufferings in the soul, they are all vanquished, but the sufferings of the body are intense. Ah my friend! this exclamation, this appeal to his heavenly Friend, was repeated frequently, always with the expression of such love and tenderness, as if this his friend was lying close to his heart.

Oh Lord! he continued, oh Lord Jesus! whom I have preached; yes, I have preached the pure Gospel to you, you may depend upon it. It continues standing in life and in death.

On Sunday morning at seven o'clock he sent the following message to the brethren at Schaffhausen: I am anxiously awaiting the desolution of my life.

Then going on: Ah my Lord, and my God! all my bones are numbered by thee! He is my life and my portion. I shall not want; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. Thou hast revealed thyself unto me, thou merciful Lord; and I have preached, that in thee is life everlasting and as many as have believed have been sealed by the Holy Ghost, and thereby I know that I was not preaching the word of a man, but thy word, and this has made me strong.

After having been brought to the sofa, he repeated the following words at least ten times: I am so happy, I am so happy! I have all I need, there are no particular sufferings. There might be cramps and convulsions. Oh merciful Lord, how happy am I! Whilst repeating

these words a new paroxysm of pains seemed to come on. He continued: My belly and my head are severely aching; but no particular sufferings. It is not too much; I can bear it. Oh gracious Lord! Oh faithful God, my Friend!

Then he said: If Mrs. N. should come to see me, send her in at once; I wish to speak to her in the name of the Lord; but no one else must be admitted. When this lady came, he said: Give your heart fully to the Lord; for in him is everlasting life; be kind to your husband, and try to win him over to the Lord! Tell him, that without the Lord Jesus all will be lost. What will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and loose his own soul?

A little later he said: My bodily sufferings are great indeed, but the Lord is with me. He loves me. Oh! He loves me. I have great peace. I can no longer bear witness; but true children of God are born; they will do it.

On Sunday evening Prelate Kapf paid him a visit, which gave him great joy.

On Sunday night he said: I have made up my mind, that nothing shall be wasted, nothing be spilt. Every thing must be kept clear. There must be added, and strength for strength.

On Monday morning, when his sufferings again increased, he was heard to say: Oh Friend of my soul! all my bones are bound up in a bundle with thee! Poor man, that I am. Oh how wretched!

When he was told of a new believer having been there, he said: Should he come again, bring him in at once; I wish to see my little ones once more.

A little later he prayed: Oh Lord! let me finish my course with joy! I am full of bodily sufferings! poor and wretched, my head is so giddy. I am full of sorrow and affliction. Oh, my body, my body, how it aches! Poor and miserable I am. Oh merciful, oh good Lord! Then raising his voice, he said: Oh my Lord! thou art mine, and I am thine. Love has joined us together. Oh thou Friend of my soul!

On Monday towards noon, when his sufferings had almost reached their most acute limit, he made himself strong in the spirit, wished to be taken to his couch, asked for his Bible, and with apostolical authority he dictated a letter, which he signed with his own hand:

Samuel Hebich, a witness of Jesus Christ. The letter was sent off in great haste. All the time there was such a seriousness, almost majesty in his whole person.

In the afternoon he was informed by telegram, that the brethren from Schaffhausen would be with him by tomorrow; upon which he said: I am glad of it. I want to see them once more.

The sufferings of my Saviour are now all before me. My life is hid with Christ in God!

To some visitors he said: You never came to me during this winter; you have neglected the word of life. What a pity! Now it is too late.

To Mrs. N. he said: You have no faith. Then going on praying: Oh my Lord, and my God! Merciful God, good God! Faithful God! My friend!

When Dr. Gundert from Calw, who had come to see him, had taken his final leave of him, he said: That is a dear man, a hard working man; he is very diligent with his pen; compared with him I am but a lazy fellow. When one of the present observed, that he too had been diligent in preaching the word, he said: Yes, so far as that, I was. And, joined in another, I think the preaching of the word is the chief thing. That is true, replied the sick man, preaching the word is number one; I had grace to do it. This is very great! Oh thou merciful Lord!

On Monday evening Mrs. N. came to see him. He received her very kindly, saying: Good evening mother! I am going to die, I am just dying! Then turning to his children: Sing a few verses, that she may get and take away something. I am too weak to speak. During the singing he showed by his gestures and every possible sign, how fully his heart was occupied with the love and praises of his God. When the singing was over, he said to his visitor: Now go home; remember me to your husband and be thankful to the Lord Jesus, that He has found you, if indeed He have found you!

At sunset he wished once more to be taken to the window. Show me my paradise once more, he said, ah, how beautiful, how glorious! Not a second Stuttgart to be found in the whole world.

On Monday night he was overheard: Oh my God, forsake me not! Oh thou my Lord and my God!

On Tuesday morning he said to N. N.: Keep close to the Lord Jesus,

in Him is the life, yea He is the life himself. I should have some one, he continued, to take me up and lay me down.

When slumbering he said: My dear N. N. is so very discontent,— it is all wind.

At ten o'clock the brethren of Schaffhausen arrived and stayed with him, till all was over, assisting, as he had prayed for, in taking him up and laying him down with the greatest tenderness. Where is my dear Sp.? he asked, and when Sp. approached his couch, he said: Trust in the Lord, and you will never be ashamed. None that trusted in the Lord has ever been ashamed. Then he asked: How are your circumstances? have you got all that you want?

A little later: Nothing will be gained by the power of men; the power of God is wanted. What has been done in the power of God, will stand for ever. Let there be no ramblings.

In the evening, when lying on his couch and feeling exceedingly weak, he prayed: Oh Lord Jesus, forsake me not in my great distress! Then raising his voice, he said: His commandments are not grievous; for whosoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he, that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He, that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ. For this is the witness of God, which he has testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, has the witness in himself. And this is the record, that God has given us eternal life, and his life in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

Later in the night (Tuesday) he said: Oh, let me see my Friend. I long to see thee, Oh my Jesus! Oh to be with Jesus for ever! to be fully saved! I see wonderful things. Ah how glorious! how beautiful is heaven!

On Wednesday the sufferings were intense. Again and again he exclaimed: Oh good God, whither shall I go? Ah, this poor weary body can find no rest, no relief wherever! Do not forsake me. Oh friend of my soul! come, come soon!

And again with a piteful tone of voice: It is almost too much, I can endure it no longer. Oh most merciful Lord, loving Lord!

From seven o'clock in the evening till midnight his sufferings were unremitting; he could not get a moment's rest. At nine o'clock six more of his children came to stay with him for the night. They were now altogether twelve standing around his deathbed. When they removed him from one couch to the other, and one of them observed that the patient was rather heavy, the dying man said: Ah yes, yes heavy indeed! When another one said: I do not believe this night to be the last, he said quickly: The will of the Lord be done! All will be well!

At midnight the pains ceased, and he got calm and quiet; he knew every one, and was conscious to the last moment. For three hours he lay quietly, scarcely ever opening his eyes; then he opened them once more and with a bright and glorious look he exclaimed: Ah, remember Malabar! Then stretching out his arms he said: Come, come! His eyes closed again; the breathing grew fainter and fainter, at last stopped, and without the least struggle the faithful witness of Jesus Christ entered into the joy of his Lord. It was just three o'clock in the morning of Ascension day, the 21st of May, when this eminent servant of the Lord left a number of his spiritual children weeping, praying and singing around his dying couch.





REMINISCENCES
OF THE
LAST FOURTEEN DAYS
OF
The Rev. Samuel Hebich
(1803-68)
A
WITNESS OF JESUS CHRIST



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